FHNW, School of Business

Social Media Strategy

Strategic Planning of Social Media Strategy for Solothurner Spitaeler AG (soH)

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Strategic Planning of Social Media Strategy for Solothurner Spitäler AG (soH)

1. Executive Summary

Die Solothurner Spitäler AG (soH) is a group of hospitals in the Canton of Solothurn (one of 26 Swiss cantons, which are broadly equivalent to states). In 2012 hospitals were merged in one company under the title “Solothurnerspitäler AG” (soH).

The soH includes Solothurn Public Hospital, Olten Cantonal Hospital, the Dornach Hospital, psychiatric services, and various outpatient services. More than 3800 employees from a wide variety of professional groups work together for the well-being of our patients. The sole owner of the non-profit corporation is currently the Canton of Solothurn.

Due to the specific geographic locations, logistics and transport between all the soH hospitals is rather difficult, which is also why few of the cantonal hospitals offer similar medical services. This is also why the cantonal population does not associate the hospitals with a single brand.

The soH hospitals have a strong network of referral doctors that send patients to the hospitals. However, communication between all the stakeholders’ groups is problematic. Many patients use the medical services of other hospitals instead of soH. Their reasons for this are not clear. Therefore, building an effective social media strategy is very important for soH. soH has invested in the development of a new web page, and this will be the primary channel of information between social media platforms.

The goal of the project is to communicate with the public not only about medical services, but also about soH’s values, soH’s doctors and R&D, soH as an employer, the soH family, and soH’s focus on empathy and compassion.

As the budget is limited, this project will be done in steps. The first step is to develop and implement a general online social media strategy that is aligned with the general hospital and marketing strategy.
2. Problem statement

The four hospitals were too small to have social media accounts or even own webpages before 2012. soH has only one logo and one webpage for all four hospitals. There is only one account on FB, Instagram, LinkedIn or Twitter. It makes also no sense to make more accounts due to a really low number of followers on social media. They post on only one account on each platform about the soH.

Even the merge was seven years ago, the people of Canton Solothurn do not identify the four hospitals as one brand. Besides, often the cantonal population visits clinics outside of the canton Solothurn. Assumed it’s because of the poor soH communication about their medical services.

The problems are listed below:

1. **Low awareness of corporate identity** –
   a. Patients and potential employees are not aware of the soH brand

2. **Lack of effective communication about medical services on social media**
   a. A lack of effective communication with stakeholders’ groups: referral doctors, patients, and hospital staff (doctors, nurses, other personnel).
   
   b. No systematic communication between the agencies and involved parties

3. **Loss of patients** – Not enough information about soH medical services; patients often decide to use the medical services of other clinics.

4. **Lack of communication about social media strategy in house** – the doctors, nurses, and other staff are not involved in the social media strategy and not aware what is going on online.

5. **No organized patient community** – a patient community to exchange information and support is lacking.
3. Background/Situation Analysis

Canton Solothurn demographics

- The Cantonal population is 266,000. Currently, the Swiss population as a whole breaks down like this:
  - **0-14 years:** 15.16%
  - **15-24 years:** 10.88%
  - **25-54 years:** 43.21%
  - **55-64 years:** 12.6%
  - **65 years and over:** 18.15%

Our patients

- Currently the main group of patients is on average 60 years old.
- No information is available on patient groups by age
- Some 30% of followers on social media are assumed to be patients; the other 70% are soH employees

Swiss Culture

Swiss people are generally considered to be reserved and rather reluctant to take part in discussions. However, research on Facebook (FB) portals shows that Swiss FB users actively discuss topics that are important to society in forums and in groups (This is my own research online).

The important point here is that even when people do not post about themselves, that does not mean they do not search for information. This assumption is confirmed by the availability of various fora on health care online.
## Usage of Social Media in Switzerland

The Swiss population is 8.47 Million (2017) Source: Swiss Confederation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Platform</th>
<th>Number of users</th>
<th>Source</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>YouTube</td>
<td>5.5 Mio.</td>
<td>(Hochrechnung aus dem <a href="https://www.igem.ch/">IGEM digiMonitor</a>, 2018)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Facebook.com</td>
<td>3.8 Mio.</td>
<td>(Quelle: Facebook <a href="https://www.werbeanzeigenmanager.ch">Werbeanzeigenmanager</a>; aktive Nutzer)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instagram</td>
<td>2.5 Mio.</td>
<td>(Quelle: Facebook <a href="https://www.werbeanzeigenmanager.ch">Werbeanzeigenmanager</a>)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Snapchat</td>
<td>1‘340’000 – 1‘475’000</td>
<td>(Quellen: <a href="https://www.yourposition.com">Yourposition.ch</a>, <a href="https://www.igem.ch">IGEM digiMonitor</a> 2018), davon 750’000 älter als 21 Jahre</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Twitter</td>
<td>920’000</td>
<td>(<a href="https://www.igem.ch">IGEM digiMonitor</a>, 2018)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pinterest</td>
<td>900’000</td>
<td>(<a href="https://www.igem.ch">IGEM digiMonitor</a>, 2018, seit 2015 stark angestiegen; siehe meine <a href="https://www.pinterest.ch">Pinterest-Marketing-Tipps</a>)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Xing</td>
<td>900’000</td>
<td>(Quelle: Xing)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## 4. Usage of Social Networks

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>14-19-Jährigen: Facebook nur auf Platz 4!</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- 92 % nutzen Youtube</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- 71 % sind im Foto-Netzwerk Instagram aktiv</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- 67 % nutzen Facebook</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- 62 % nutzt den Börsen-Neuling Snapchat und schickt Freunden und bekannten Fotos, die maximal zehn Sekunden lang sichtbar sind.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- 37 % pinnt Bilder bei Pinterest</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- 32 % twittern</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- 28 % nutzen Tumblr</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>20-29-Jährigen</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- 90 % schauen Videos auf Youtube</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- 88 % posten bei Facebook</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- 71 % nutzen Instagram</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- 30 % twittern</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- 8 % nutzen Stayfriends</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>30- bis 39 Jährigen: 79 % nutzen Youtube</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- 74 % sind auf Facebook</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- 30 % vernetzen sich auf Xing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- 30 % twittern</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- 19 % sind beim Konkurrenten LinkedIn aktiv</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>40-49-Jährigen</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- 67 Prozent nutzen Youtube</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- 63 Prozent sind auf Facebook</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- 16 Prozent nutzen Instagram</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- 21 Prozent vernetzen sich auf Xing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- 20 Prozent twittern</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>50-59-Jährigen</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- 55 % schauen Videos auf Youtube</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- 53 % nutzen Facebook</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- 27 % sind WhatsApp-Nutzer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- 16 % twittern</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- 15 % sind auf Xing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- 15 % sind auf Stayfriends</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- 12 % nutzen Instagram</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5. About SoH

Solothurner Spitäler AG (soH) is a hospital chain at four locations, each with various medical care emphases. The Federal government mandate for Solothurner Spitäler AG is primarily to provide all basic medical care for the population of the Canton of Solothurn. SoH attaches great importance to high standards of care and proximity to the population. Over 3,800 employees from a wide variety of professional groups work together for the wellbeing of SoH patients. SoH is a nonprofit public limited company owned by the Canton of Solothurn.

Beside basic medical care, each hospital practises its own specialism. Four hospitals belong to soH:

1. **Bürgerspital Solothurn**: 1800 employees, of whom 180 are trainees, from 39 nationalities. Solothurn Public Hospital is the provider of medical care for the City and the Canton of Solothurn. It practices four specialisms: invasive cardiology with two cardiac catheterization labs, a stroke unit, the Solothurn Breast Center and the Center for Oncology and Hematology.

2. **Kantonsspital Olten**: 1455 employees, of whom 133 are trainees and 392 are men. Olten Cantonal Hospital is responsible for the medical care of the approximately 100,000 inhabitants in the regions of Olten-Gösgen and Thal-Gäu. In addition, we offer the following focal points in Olten: soH acute geriatrics, bariatric surgery, the Mittelland Breast Center, soH spine surgery and the soH Urological Competence Center.

3. **Spital Dornach**: Emergency (365 / 24h). 419 employees, of whom 27 are trainees and 281 are women. Dornach Hospital delivers stationary medical and surgical acute care for the population in its catchment area. In addition, Dornach Hospital specializes in bariatric surgery and orthopedic surgery and works closely with other specialists in other specialist disciplines. In addition to trauma care, emphasis is laid on the treatment of gastrointestinal diseases, obesity, oncology, and hematology. The hospital works closely together with physicians, including conciliar physicians, in the region.

4. **Psychiatric Services**: In addition to emergency and crisis ambulances, this service unit offers a comprehensive range of psychiatric care and services, which are responsible for expanded mental health care throughout the Canton. Comprehensive treatment, therapy, counseling and care service are available for the clinics for psychiatry, psychotherapy, and psychosomatic medicine and for child and adolescent psychiatry. The treatment is tailored to the individual needs of the patient and takes place on outpatient, day clinic or inpatient basis, depending on need. Finally, psychiatric services cover forensic psychiatry in the Canton.

soH’s main task is to provide medical care for the entire population in the Canton of Solothurn 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. This means offering services that are not attractive from a purely financial point of view, but such services are important for the health care of the population. SoH is a partner of Bern University’s Inselspital hospital and the University Hospital Basel.
6. Strategic Issues

**Primary business goals**
- Position in minds of cantonal population the Solothurner Spitäler AG (soH) as a single brand and increase the number of people that know about your brand.
- Increase number of people to stay within soH for medical services instead of going to clinics of other cantons.

**Secondary business goal:**
- Create a social media content calendar with integrated measurement structure
- Maintain regular social media activity, in line with the overall strategy and content calendar
- Maintain measurement regularly
- Increase in the number of followers and changes in reactions on posts. Due to limited resources, we focus only on Web Page, Facebook and Instagram
- Trace impact and ROI of social media on hospitals.

**Social media strategic issues:**
- The soH webpage is not integrated to social media - there is no link between webpage and social media
- Content is not optimized for social media and not enough of human resources for content creation and curation
- People responsible for in Social Media have other responsibilities and therefore not enough time for social media
- There is no research done about content - what do followers want to read on social media

7. Milestones

- Action plan to be finished in August 2019 (Should be presented at the Management Board meeting).
- March 2019 start a joint research project titled “New ways to communicate to referral doctors” (March– 15 August 2019)
- Present the Project at the Klinik Marketing Kongress 2020 in Zürich. The congress only takes place in German-speaking countries.
Objectives

1. To increase soH followers on Facebook and Instagram to drive more organic social traffic to the website. That gain at least 1,000 new followers from our social media activity by 31st December 2019.

2. Increase the number of “successful” (with high number of likes) posts through regular audit of content and social media. At least 100 likes per post till the end of December 2019.

3. Do semi-open questionnaires with at least 30 referral doctors of soH during April and May 2019 to find out what social media platforms they use to optimize communication channels.

4. During April and May 2019 do online survey with at least 100 patients of soH / people who live in Canton of Solothurn to find out what social networks they use to get information about diagnosis or any health care issues.
8. The Posts

It is important that only one general page for SoH is actively presented on any social network (FB, IG or other). Posts represent the various medical services offered by each of the four locations.

1. Clear guidelines for employees: do’s and don’ts
2. Every content posted on social media by employees should be approved
3. The topics can be divided into seven areas:
   - Monitoring and prevention:
     - Lifestyle: sport, immune system, healthy food and nutrition, healthy snacks, etc.
     - Obesity: dieting, cholesterol, etc.
     - Seasonal trends: allergies, sunscreen, ticks, fatigue, travel and holidays, etc.
     - Self-checks for various symptoms
   - Diagnosis of diseases or specific health conditions,
     - Blogs, doctors’ interviews, scientific articles, short posts, etc.
   - Intervention:
     - Treatment of specific diseases and health conditions: success stories, operations, methods, and outcomes
   - Recovery:
     - Rehabilitation and quality of life: events, workshops, presentations, working groups, etc.
   - soH Family – SoH employees: internal communication, events, also jobs posts. The goal is to create the good atmosphere of a great employer on social media.
   - To attract more followers, job offers will also be posted on Facebook and Instagram
   - SoH Kids on Instagram (IG): → Separate portal (if needed) → there are many tags of newborns on IG.
9. Metrics

Metrics (match objectives by the Number):

Defining KPI: — KPI defines what is valuable to the hospital, tracks over time and evaluates success.

KPI measures the success of achieving objectives.

1. **Objective - KPI:**
   a. New followers
   b. Audience growth rate = (New followers / total followers) x 100

2. **Objective - KPI:**
   a. Post reach % = (post views / total followers) x 100. This is the number of people who have seen soH post since it went live.
   b. Engagement → Applause rate % = (Likes / Followers) x 100 → number of people who are clapping, liking, or favoriting your posts, relative to your total followers. This will allow to share the right content for your audience.

3. **Objective KPI:** Number of requests for the interviews relative to interviews done. Concluding on communication channels and choosing the right social media strategy

4. **Objective KPI:** Number of sent links to fill the online questionnaire relative to the completed questionnaires. Segregating the answers by age, gender or any other criteria. Defining the ranking for social media platforms and right strategies for the posts.
10. **Defining Audience(s), Identifying Goal(s), Crafting Message(s)**

**Definition of success for this project:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Audience(s):</th>
<th>Primary</th>
<th>Secondary</th>
<th>Other</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1. Patients</td>
<td>Referral physicians</td>
<td>Cantonal residents or from neighbor cantons</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. Relatives</td>
<td>Employees</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3. Potential patients</td>
<td>Gesundheitsförderung (Federal health organization)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Social Media Goal(s):**

What do you want audiences to **understand** about this project/initiative and then **do** as a result of your social media efforts?

| Social Media Goal(s): | Increase brand awareness: SoH is a chain of hospitals at four locations in canton Solothurn and offers a wide range of high quality health care services. With the help of social media to motivate patients to visit soH instead of going to another hospital. Increase interest of public to the soH and make soH the source of information about health issues. | Increase information flow to referrals about the soH doctors, medical services and all changes that are done within the hospitals, in order to retain patients within canton Increase the number of employees following the soH on social media platforms and empower them to be the ambassadors of the SoH brand. Integrate the information of the Federal health organization to content and transmits these goals to the cantonal population. | Increase number of patients visiting soH – problem for now: (Patients are sent by the referral doctors to other hospitals in different cantons). |

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Message(s):
What are your key messages for each audience?

If you need care – visit soH!
SoH stands for patients’ value and quality at easily accessible locations. (this is a part of the marketing strategy)

soH Referrals
soH offers all types of medical services and soH doctors can be easily reached for specialized medical consultations for patients. People from canton should be sent to soH instead of other hospitals.

SoH Family
SoH is an attractive employer with career growth opportunities:
SoH Family is a hospital where employees are very important.
SoH cares about the goals of the Federal health organization and spreads the information to the Cantonal population.

Neighborhood:
SoH takes responsibility for the Canton of Solothurn, it offers a wide variety of high quality medical services. If you need medical services you should visit soH.

Defining Success:
How will you know your goals have been achieved?

At the beginning of 2019 soH Facebook page was liked by 2008 people.

Questionnaire Referrals
From more than 100 requests for interviews in the given time frame there were done only 31 interviews.

Questionnaire patients / canton residents
108 completed questionnaires showed that in 99% people do not follow soH on any of social media.
In August 2,835 people and followed by 2,904 people.

**New followers** = 2,835 – 2,008 = 827

**soH Audience growth rate** = \((827 / 2835) \times 100 = 29.2\%\)

In the beginning of 2019 the range of likes per post varied from 5 to 100.

The applause rate for posts is still very low. There is no real progress since the beginning of 2019 in number of likes, shares, reposts. This is because the likes are still by 70% from employees.

The outcome of the interview in short:

Very often referral doctors sent patients to other cantons because there is not enough information about certain medical services of doctors of soH.

Referral doctors use web site of soH for information about new doctors and procedures.

Referral doctors do NOT use social media for information search or any other health care issue. They do not follow hospitals on social media.

**Conclusion:** Based on the answers of referrals in 2020 follows a new strategy for the web content and new communication strategy with referrals.

| Channels | This has confirmed the earlier research, where we found out that more than 70% of likes on FB and IG come from the soH employees. This shows that soH do not provide content that is interesting for the followers. The questionnaire showed that for the information on health care issues people use search engines as google and visit diverse forums. People often go to other clinics and hospitals because of own experiences or influenced by the word of mouth or by the referral doctors. **Conclusion:** Right at the moment soH needs a new social media strategy, which would include a research on what content is interesting for the soH social media followers. |
|---|---|---|
| | | |

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| | | www.fhnw.ch/wirtschaft |
11. **Tactical Issues: Choosing Social Media Tools**

- Find out where on social media the patients are and create a plan how to grow the community
  1. After the plan is done, start building a strong online community.
  2. Post content on general health issues for a wide range of stakeholders’ groups.
  3. Post content on complex health issues and medical conditions that are among SoH’s care specialisms.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tool</th>
<th>Resources Needed (Human/Financial)</th>
<th>Timeline for Launch</th>
<th>Monitored (How and by Whom)</th>
<th>Measured (How and by Whom)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>soH Web Page</strong></td>
<td>Team of IT specialists to program the Web and give tech support.</td>
<td>The new web page is launched in January 2019. The page is easy to navigate and with most important content.</td>
<td>Monitored on the clicks, visits, who are the visitors and what is watched most.</td>
<td>Monitored by one of the marketing team members</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Facebook (Page)</strong></td>
<td>One person (Regula)</td>
<td>Once a week till the end of 2019</td>
<td>Monitored by Regula – following the plan and changing the content and frequency of posts if needed</td>
<td>Measured by FB Metrics: 1. Calendar posts such as day, time, content, and reactions on every post. Controlled by the person who creates the content</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Instagram</td>
<td>YouTube</td>
<td></td>
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<td>----------------</td>
<td>-----------</td>
<td>---------</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>need a team to make videos</strong></td>
<td>One person (Ilka)</td>
<td>At least two team members to create videos, video equipment. (soH has a special room and good equipment to make in-house videos</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>At least once a month till the end of 2019</td>
<td>At least once every three month till the end of 2019</td>
<td>Planned and monitored by the marketing director Oliver</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monitored by Ilka – following the plan and changing the content and frequency of posts if needed</td>
<td>Measured by Instagram Metrics: Calendar posts such as day, time, content, and reactions on every post. Controlled by the person who creates the content</td>
<td>Measured by changes in the number of views and number of followers on YouTube</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**12. Budget**

Seven people in the Marketing Team and about, CHF 20,000 for external costs. Responsibility: Marketing and Communication Team and HR Marketing
13. **Measuring overall success**

1. If soH gains at least 1,000 new followers on Facebook and Instagram by 31st December 2019, that will be one success celebrated. By the growth rate of 29.2 percent, this is possible. This would also mean that the strategy of posts was successful, what can be considered as success for the overall social media strategy.

2. Success is if every post through December 2019 garners at least 100 likes, it will be another success. However, with the new algorithm of Facebook organic reach is almost impossible. It’s getting tricky to get increase in likes. From my point of view this objective is hard to reach.

3. There were 31 interviews done with referral doctors. This is a real success because it was difficult to convince busy doctors to be away from work for an hour for the interview. The results of interviews are quite interesting. 29 of 31 doctors do not use social media to communicate with patients or to search information related to health care. They just do not use the social media at all. The result of interviews follows as a blog in December 2019.

4. Successful can be considered - 108 online surveys were done with patients of soH (people who live in Canton of Solothurn) to find out what social networks they use to get information about diagnosis or any health care issues. All 108 people participated in online survey use social media to search for information on health care. However, no one of those 108 follows the soH Facebook or Instagram pages, or any other social media soH channel. For soH social media strategy, this is a critical issue. This means there is no interest of public to soH social media posts. The result of interviews follows as a blog in December 2019.

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**14. Conclusion**

soH is well placed to plan and implement a social media strategy. First, it has a good stable hospital infrastructure. Second, almost half of the Swiss population use social networks. Statistics show a concentration of users on YouTube, Facebook, Instagram, and LinkedIn. It makes sense to focus primarily on those platforms. Until now, most of the followers on social networks are soH employees. This is also important because the employees are the supporters of the brand and can spread information about soH. Besides, this is important for the main business goal – positioning of the four hospitals as one brand and employer and employee branding.
Concentration of the users on YouTube, FB, IG, & LinkedIn makes it easier to reach the target audiences. However,

1. Information is lacking on how to reach the main target group, patients older than 60 years and on how to organize these in a soH community.

2. Initial research has not uncovered ways to communicate with the referral physicians so as to retain patients within the Canton of Solothurn and use soH medical services.

At the moment, it is unclear what information will be most important for users on social media, because there is not much to compare. This is important to consider in planning to make a good mix of content, compare reactions, and discover who are the soH followers and who are the potential target groups. The statistics and materials of the Mayo Clinic enable us to play with the content to identify audience needs and target patient groups.